

board of directors and a statewide membership of individuals and companies. Its focus also changed to monitoring State fiscal matters and advocating for sound fiscal policy.

In 1957, MTA started publishing "Fiscal Facts for Minnesotans," a popular handbook of State and local fiscal data that continues to be published today. A widely read and discussed publication series was begun in 1969 with the first release of "How Does Minnesota Compare?" a State-by-State comparison of key tax and spending aggregates.

The Minnesota Taxpayers Association has steadfastly stressed the importance of good information and citizen involvement in government. As evidence of its commitment to these goals, the Association continues to focus on research publications aimed at educating the public, publications like its award-winning "Understanding Your Property Taxes" and its "Guide to State Government Spending," as well as on countless public presentations and frequent legislative consultations.

As State and local governments take on more responsibility for designing, funding, and delivering public services, and as taxpayers look for greater value for their tax dollars, the need for organizations like the Minnesota Taxpayers Association increases. The Association's work over the past 75 years has been a great asset to the people of Minnesota, and its reputation for excellence and integrity assures a prominent and vital role for this outstanding organization in the improvement of Minnesota State and local government in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO FRAN FLANIGAN

● Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and honor an extraordinary Marylander and steward of the Chesapeake Bay, Fran Flanigan. Fran is stepping down from a long and distinguished career as executive director of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and I want to express my personal congratulations and thanks for her outstanding and dedicated service.

When the history of the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort is finally written there are many people who will be recognized for the role they played in helping to "Save the Bay." But Fran's hard work and creativity over the past three decades will distinguish her as one of the true leaders in this important endeavor. Fran has been a determined advocate for the Chesapeake Bay from virtually the inception of the Bay program. In December 1983, she organized a 3-day conference which brought together the Governors of Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania, the EPA Administrator, members of the State legislatures and many other individuals and organization. That conference resulted in the signing of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement which formally bound the Federal and State governments to work together to re-

store the Bay and effectively initiated the cooperative Chesapeake Bay Program.

I became acquainted with Fran during that historic summit and have had the opportunity to work closely with her and her non-profit organization, the Citizens Program for the Chesapeake Bay, later the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, for many years. I can personally attest to the tremendous energy and creativity which she consistently brought to her work. Fran has an amazing ability to pull people together and has been called upon time and time again to convene stakeholder roundtables on key issues and expand public involvement. Whether the subject was agriculture, toxic pollution or land use, Fran would try to find common ground and a way to ensure that different States and interest groups moved forward together for the betterment of the Chesapeake Bay.

Fran Flanigan and Alliance have been very forward thinking and helped move the Bay cleanup program upstream into the rivers that flow into the Chesapeake. She reoriented the Alliance to work at a more local level and promote local restoration activities, all in an effort to better acquaint the public with the resources they were working to protect and restore. She knew that public participation in the efforts to clean up the Bay were essential and the key to keeping the Bay cleanup effort on course and worked hard to keep the public informed about key Chesapeake issues through the Alliance's outstanding white papers, fact sheets, newsletters and the Bay Journal. She also helped organize everything from small watershed groups to huge public outreach efforts such as those needed before the signing of the 1987 and 2000 Bay Agreements.

Fran has been there on the front line from the very start of the Bay program and, even in retirement, I know will continue to be involved in the Bay efforts. Her dedication and efforts over the years have earned her the respect and admiration of everyone with whom she has worked. She has been instrumental in bringing to so many people an enjoyment and sense of ownership of the Chesapeake Bay. I join with her many colleagues and friends in extending my best wishes and thanks for her leadership and commitment.●

RECOGNITION OF PETER HENRY'S SERVICE TO SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary work done by Peter Henry as Director of the VA Black Hills Health Care System in Fort Meade and Hot Springs, SD. I also wish him all the best in his new position as Chief Executive Officer of the Extended Care and Rehabilitation Patient Service Line for Veterans Integrated Service Network, VISN, 13.

Peter has been a valuable asset in working the myriad of issues affecting

the VA over the years, especially his efforts to keep services going to Category C veterans when others could not. Peter, his wife Sharon, and their five children, have also been important members of the Black Hills community. Peter serves on the Board of the Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce and the Sturgis United Way.

Peter's service in the VA dates back to 1970, when he was a Management Intern at VA Central Office in Washington, DC. He later served as Chief of Personnel Service at Vancouver, Martinez, and Palo Alto VAMCs. He completed the Associate Director Training Program in 1982 at the VAMC in San Francisco, CA. Peter then served as Associate Director at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, FL and as Assistant Medical Center Director at the VAMC Long Beach, CA.

Peter came to South Dakota in 1993 as the Director of the Medical Center at Fort Meade, SD. Three years later, he became Director of the VA Black Hills Health Care System. Peter is a third generation VA employee and currently serves as president of the VA Chapter of the Senior Executives Association and on the National Board of that organization.

I have had the pleasure of working with Peter through my career in the United States House of Representatives and now in the United States Senate. Peter has helped to educate me and other South Dakota officials on a variety of veterans issues, and his caring for the individual veterans in the Black Hills has been a great asset to our efforts to improve health care services for our Nation's heroes. Peter's commitment to expanding VA services into rural regions of South Dakota includes the use of outreach clinics which have allowed veterans in rural areas to receive needed care closer to their homes.

As I travel South Dakota and meet with veterans, I am reminded of the very core of what the Founding Fathers meant when they talked about America's citizen soldiers who serve as the bulwark of defending our democracy and freedom. The sacrifices of the men and women who served this Nation in time of war are a dramatic story that we need to tell to future generations.

We need to remind younger generations of the sacrifice of the quiet heroes who have served our Nation in the military service. We need to remind them that freedom isn't really free. Throughout our Nation's proud history, people have made profound sacrifices to preserve liberty and democracy.

I am pleased that with the help of dedicated people like Peter Henry, we have finally begun to honor additional commitments made to veterans nationwide. Peter and his staff at the VA Black Hills Health Care System know that veterans health care is this Nation's priority and not just an afterthought. I look forward to working